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George III. Kurd

HELPS

TO A

RIGHT DECISION

UPON THE

MERITS

OF THE LATE

Treaty of Commerce with France.

ADDRESSED TO THE

Members of both Houſes of Parliament.

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W. Musgrave.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

HELPS

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Treaty of Commerce with France.

THAT a Treaty of Commerce with France ſhould create a general alarm in this country, is not to be wondered at, when it is conſidered, that none has ever had effect between the two Nations: The Marine Treaties concluded by Elizabeth in 1559 and 1564, and by Charles the ſecond in 1677, containing no tariff or ſtipulations reſpecting the importation of merchandize into either kingdom from the other; all

their commercial proviſions being confined to the ſecurity of the trading ſhips and traders' property: On the contrary, we find that in the year 1678, the Houſe of Commons came to a reſolution, *that the trade of France was detrimental to the kingdom*, and paſſed an Act in conſequence, prohibiting the importation into England of all French commodities whatſoever for three years, and to *the end of the then next Seſſion of Parliament*; and no Seſſion having been held during the remainder of Charles's reign, the prohibition continued of courſe until the acceſſion of James the ſecond, who procured the repeal of the Prohibitory Act in 1685. But the renewal of the prohibition was one of the firſt conſequences of the Revolution in 1688.

Ten years after, viz. in 1698, an attempt was made to frame a Marine Treaty between the two Crowns, and an agent was ſent over by Colbert to London for the purpoſe, but he returned without accompliſhing the object of his miſſion; and the Commercial Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, it is well known having

having been in part diſapproved by the Houſe of Commons, was never carried into execution; and not having been mentioned in the ſubſequent Treaty of Aix la Chappelle, became abrogated; for it is a maxim of the law of nations, that all Treaties are ſuſpended by war, and if not renewed by name in the ſubſequent Treaty of Peace, are to be conſidered as null and void.

When the Peace of Paris was negociating, I remember to have heard it ſaid, that the Duke of Bedford and the Duc de Choiſeul, had ſome converſation reſpecting a Treaty of Commerce: The Duc de Choiſeul propoſed to renew the Treaty of 1713, *in toto*; and the Duke of Bedford propoſed to leave out the 8th and 9th articles; but as neither would agree to the other's propoſal, the matter dropt; and although both Nations may be ſaid to have before and ſince acted towards each other, in many reſpects conformable to the other parts of the Treaty of 1713, yet the Treaty itſelf has never been allowed to be binding upon either.

From

From this ſhort ſketch of the hiſtory of our Commercial Treaties, or rather negotiations with France, theſe important queſtions naturally occur, viz. If it has not hitherto been judged wiſe or neceſſary, to have a Treaty of Commerce with France, how has it become wiſe and neceſſary to have one now? and is the preſent Treaty ſo eſſentially different, and the ſtate of the Nations' Commerce ſo greatly altered, that the preſent Treaty ought to be approved by Parliament, although that of 1713, was juſtly reprobated?

To aſſiſt the Members of both Houſes of Parliament in forming their opinion of the anſwers which ought to be given to theſe two queſtions is the object of this undertaking; and although, neither employed by, or connected with Miniſtry or Oppoſition, I have been impelled by a high ſenſe of duty and affection to his Majeſty, and zeal for the proſperity of my Country, impartially to offer to their conſideration, upon a buſineſs of ſuch vaſt importance, the reſult of much experience in public affairs, and a long acquaint-

acquaintance with the commercial intereſts of the nation; for it is now full thirty years ſince I was firſt ſworn a ſervant of the crown.

It is indeed a matter too eſſential to the general welfare to be treated as a ſubject for party diſcuſſion, and I cannot but applaud the candor and wiſdom of the Miniſter in proroguing both Houſes of Parliament after the Treaty was concluded, and thereby giving time for its due conſideration before their approbation of it was aſked for.

As no proper anſwer can be given to the queſtions I have propounded, without a general knowledge of the progreſs of the trade of England, it is neceſſary to take a brief review of it for two centuries back, and eſpecially of that part of it which was carried on between us and France.

I have never met with any tolerably exact eſtimate of the total value of the exports from England in the reign of Elizabeth, but it muſt have been conſiderable, if we give

give credit to what Guicciardini ſays of the value of the imports from England into the Netherlands, in the beginning of her reign. The Woollen Drapery alone he eſtimates at a million, and the Wool and other merchandize, at about £. 1,400,000 more. Camden however does not eſtimate our exports to the Netherlands in 1564, at above half the ſum; and of that he ſays, the Woollen Drapery made only £. 500,000.

Much of this was again re-exported to other countries, with whom England had then little or no direct trade; and as with Calais we had loſt our ſtaple there, France alſo got her ſupply of Engliſh Woollens through the Netherlands.

That the balance of trade was then in our favour, and increaſed conſiderably during Elizabeth's reign, may be collected from the circumſtance of her Council's allowing Wheat to be exported, when it was ſold at 10s. per quarter inſtead of 6s. 8d. which is a proof of the greater plenty of money; and from the ſtatute for increaſing the number

number of Sheriffs, giving as the reaſon for doing ſo, that there were then more gentlemen of good ability to ſerve the office than had been formerly: But the Duke D'Alva's perſecution in the Netherlands, and Louis the IXth in France, by forcing ſo many manufacturers to take refuge in England, could not fail to add greatly to the national ſtock; and by reducing the imports and encreaſing the exports, occaſion an influx of wealth into the kingdom; and accordingly we find *Wheeler* in his *Treatiſe of Commerce*, aſſerting that in the year 1600, the Company of Merchant Adventurers only, did export to the value of a million in Woollen Cloths, part of which were of the kind called *new drapery*; the diſtinguiſhing appellation of the light cloths made by the refugees, and which is the more probable, as the inſurrection of the Moors in Grenada, by putting a ſtop to the Woollen Manufactures in that country, muſt have ſerved to increaſe the foreign demand for ours.

This increaſe of demand ſeems however to have produced careleſſneſs in our manu-

facturers, for we find King James iſſuing a commiſſion in 1622, to ſeveral lords and gentlemen, to inquire into the cauſe of the decay of trade, and particularly of the *loſs of eſtimation and vent of Engliſh Woollen Cloths in foreign parts*; and the author of the *Circle of Commerce* makes a ballance of no leſs than 298,870l. againſt the nation in that year; this however, cannot be allowed to be a correct account; if we attend to the before-mentioned circumſtances, and to what Sir Joſiah Child aſſerts in his diſcourſe upon trade, that in the year 1635, only thirteen years afterwards, there were more Merchants to be found on the Exchange of London worth 1000l. each, than there were in 1600 worth one hundred; and we find that Wheat was allowed to be exported in 1624, when the price did not exceed 1l. 12s. per quarter; whereas in 1603, the exporting price was limited to 1l. 6s. 8d. which certainly implies an increaſe of money. I ſhould likewiſe have mentioned the reduction of the rate of intereſt from 10 to 8 per cent. which took place in 1624, as another proof of the increaſe of money; did not the

the ſtatute which reduced it, give as a reaſon for doing ſo, that *the value of lands and of other commodities of England were much abated*; which circumſtances, if true, muſt have tended to raiſe the natural intereſt of money, and would now be thought a very extraordinary reaſon for reducing the legal intereſt, which according to the preſent prevailing opinions, ought never to be lower than the natural.

To this compulſive reduction however, Sir Joſiah Child chiefly imputes the wealth acquired by the Engliſh Merchants, and the riſe of lands in the ten following years, and it ſeems the meaſure was deemed ſo beneficial, that in 1651, a further reduction from 8 to 6 per cent. was made by Act of Parliament, and the ſtatute of 1714, which reduces it from 6 to 5 per cent. aſſerts in the preamble, that the *former reductions had been found by experience very beneficial to the advancement of trade and improvement of lands:* How it has happened that no further reduction has ſince been made, is certainly worth enquiring; for although it ſhould not

be admitted, notwithſtanding the inſtances I have given, that the reduction of the legal intereſt below the natural, would be beneficial to the nation; yet there can be no good reaſon aſſigned for keeping up the legal greatly above the natural, which was the caſe in 1752, when a large ſum of the national debt was reduced to $3\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 per cent. by conſent of the public creditors; and the legal intereſt ought then to have been reduced to 4 per cent. for by keeping it up to 5 per cent. the merchants and manufacturers were obliged to pay at that rate for the diſcount of their inland bills and notes, to the great prejudice of our trade and hindrance of the increaſe of our national wealth; for no commercial propoſition is more evident, than that low intereſt will promote trade and increaſe manufactures; as the manufacturer is thereby enabled to provide a larger ſtock of materials in the proper ſeaſon; the warehouſe-man to give larger credit to the merchant, and the merchant to export greater quantities, and wait longer for his returns. But it was not for the private advantage of the two citizens, whom

the

the Pelham's were guided by, in money matters, Sir John Bernard and Mr. Gideon, to reduce the then legal intereſt of money; and therefore it was not done: which ought to be a caution to all miniſters, not to confide too much in merchants, or monied men; their information is greatly to be valued, but their advice is generally intereſted. Our preſent upright and able miniſter, and the navigation of England, had a happy eſcape from the dangerous effects of ſuch influence in 1784, and the nation might poſſibly have ſaved ſome millions, if he had been wholly free from it in 1786. I truſt however, he will ſpeedily compenſate to the public for the exorbitant gain individuals have been allowed to make through the riſe of the funds, by availing himſelf of that circumſtance to reduce the legal intereſt to a par with what they now produce *. But I muſt

* Had the never to be ſufficiently regretted great Miniſter who preſided at the Treaſury from April 1763 to July 1765, remained in office, he would have reduced the legal intereſt to 4 per cent. as ſoon as he had diſpoſed of the unfunded debt; and he had taken an important ſtep towards it, by iſſuing Exchequer Bills at an intereſt of only 3 per cent. and bringing the Bank into an agreement to circulate them at that rate.

return

return to obſerve further, upon the reports of the ballance of our foreign trade, which was ſaid to have been near 300,000 l. againſt the nation, when the firſt reduction of legal intereſt took place in 1624; and from *Davenant's* account, it would appear to have been continually augmenting againſt us; for he ſays it had riſen in 1662, to near two millions, and the *Britiſh Merchant* makes it amount to 2,132,864 l. in 1668.

The reſpect due to ſuch great authorities as Sir J. Davenant, and Mr. Martin, Inſpector-general of the Cuſtoms in 1713, and author of the *Britiſh Merchant*, would incline me implicitly to adopt their ſtatements, if they did not carry upon the face of them ſtrong evidence of their fallacy.

The whole amount of the circulating ſpecie of the kingdom, was at this time leſs than ſix millions, as Sir William Petty calculates; and as we have no gold or ſilver mines of our own, the only poſſible means by which we can obtain or retain ſpecie money, are from the ballance of our foreign trade

trade being in our favour, or by loans from foreigners: The latter means was not then in uſe, and if the ballance of our foreign trade had been continually increaſing againſt us from 1622, and had riſen to 2,132,864 l. in 1668, there could not have remained any circulating ſpecie in the kingdom; nay, it is evident to a demonſtration, that if a ballance of two millions per ann. had been againſt the nation for only the laſt ſix years, viz. from 1662 to 1668, *twelve millions* of ſpecie would have been required to diſcharge it; which was double the amount of all our circulating gold and ſilver; and conſequently ſpecie money would have been as ſcarce in England, as it is now in ſome of the American States, from ſimilar cauſes.

But there are other circumſtances from which the fallacy of theſe ſtatements may be collected: Our Woollen, Leather, Iron, and Silk Manufactures had flouriſhed greatly during thoſe forty-ſix years, inſomuch that it was found neceſſary to prohibit the exportation of raw or tanned hides in 1630, and of Wool in 1660; and the Silk Throwſters

Throwſters Company employed 40,000 perſons in London in the latter year. The price of Wheat which in 1622 was only 1l. 3s. the quarter, was prohibited to be exported in 1632, and we find it at 2l. 8s. in 1646, and much above that price for ſix years after; and in the year 1660, it was allowed to be exported, when it did not exceed 2l. Beef was alſo then allowed to be exported at 5l. per barrel, Pork at 6l. and Butter at 4l. 10s. and in the year 1623, Wheat was permitted to be exported at 2l. 8s. per quarter; and Lands which had ſold for twelve years purchaſe in 1622, had alſo riſen in proportion, for we find them at fifteen years purchaſe in 1672; and in the preamble to the commiſſion of the Council of Trade in that year, it is aſſerted, that the *trade and wealth of the ſubjects, both at home and abroad, were much increaſed.* All which facts are indiſputable proofs of the increaſe of money and national proſperity. The tonage of our merchant ſhips muſt alſo have been increaſing during that period, as Davenant ſays, it amounted in 1687, to double what it was in 1666.

Having

Having thus proved the fallacy of theſe ſtatements, it may be proper to ſuggeſt ſome reaſons for their being ſo erroneous.— And firſt, it appears to have been the practice in thoſe times, to add to the rated value of both exports and imports, the cuſtoms or duties charged upon them: Now although the cuſtoms or duties paid by any commodity exported, enter into its price, and make a part of its charge to the foreign purchaſer, and conſequently the whole amount is to be placed to the nation's credit; yet the cuſtoms or duties paid *here* upon imported commodities, are by no means to be added to their coſt as a charge againſt the nation; becauſe the money is not to be remitted to foreigners, and only enhances the price to the inhabitants of the country who conſume the commodities. The whole amount therefore of the cuſtoms or duties upon imported commodities, is to be deducted from the eſtimate of our imports given by theſe writers. Another circumſtance is alſo to be attended to, which is, that almoſt all our commodities were then ſubject to duties upon exportation;

therefore it became the intereſt of the exporter to ſmuggle outwards whenever he could find an opportunity of doing it, which in thoſe days could not be difficult; and to enter as much under the real quantity exported as he could prevail on the Cuſtom-Houſe Officer to allow him to do.

The accounts being made up for ſingle years, are for that reaſon alſo liable to great exception, for the long continuance of an adverſe wind towards the end of the year, may have thrown a conſiderable part of what would otherwiſe have been included in its imports, into the next, and thus improperly augment the one and diminiſh the other.

But after all thoſe allowances are made, much will remain to be placed to the account of the patriotic zeal of the writers themſelves, or poſſibly to their partiality againſt France; for it is to our trade with that kingdom, the chief of our commercial grievances are imputed: And indeed, if the ſtate of our trade with France, laid before

fore Parliament in 1675, be any thing near the truth, there was ample ground of complaint; for the exports to France are therein ſtated to amount to only £. 170,000, and our imports to £. 1,500,000: Now as the Tariff of 1664, had then been in force eleven years, if the ſmallneſs of our exports to France was ſuppoſed to be the effect of its operation, is it not ſurprizing that it was not ſooner reſented? And is it not ſtill more extraordinary to find it referred to in the Treaty of 1713, and the renewal of it conſidered as a benefit to Great Britain? I have never ſeen that Tariff, and cannot therefore examine it; but I hope whoever is in poſſeſſion of a correct copy of it will give it to the public; as a compariſon of it, with that annexed to the late Treaty, muſt greatly aſſiſt Parliament in forming a judgment of the ſuperior advantage of the latter.

As however there was not in 1675, any Commercial Treaty ſubſiſting between the two kingdoms, the King and his Parliament were at liberty to chuſe their meaſures for redreſſing the grievance. But the Marine

Treaty of 1677, does not nevertheleſs make any ſtipulation in favour of Engliſh manufactures, or merchandize carried into France; and by leaving out ſeveral important articles which had hitherto been included in the liſt of counterband, rather aggravated than remedied the complaint; and accordingly the Parliament in the following year, came to the reſolution I have already quoted, and paſſed an Act prohibiting the importation into England of all French commodities whatſoever.

The wiſdom of this prohibition is highly celebrated by all our commercial writers; and the good effects attributed to it are ſo great, that if we give them full credit, we ſhall find in them, a further reaſon for ſuſpecting the former eſtimate of the nation's loſs by her foreign trade, to be a groſs miſrepreſentation.

The ballance ſtated againſt the nation in 1668, we have already ſeen, is ſaid to have been upwards of two millions, and of this £. 1,300,000, appears by the above account

to

to have been loſt by our trade with France; the prohibition therefore of that trade, however rigorouſly enforced, could not do more than reduce the balance againſt us to £. 670,000; but when we examine the articles which were then uſually imported from France, we ſhall find good reaſon to ſuppoſe moſt of them, or ſimilar commodities, muſt have continued to be imported from other countries, after the prohibition of importing them from France took place; and conſequently the reduction of the general balance could not be ſo conſiderably in our favour as their amount.

The following were the articles imported from France, and their eſtimated value before the prohibition in 1677.

	£.
Manufactured Silks, —	600,000
Linen, Sail Cloths, and Canvas,	500,000
Cambrics, — —	200,000
Beaver Hats, Glaſs, Watches and Clocks, — —	220,000
Carried over —	1,520,000

Brought

	£.
Brought over, —	1,520,000
Paper, — —	90,000
Iron Ware, — —	40,000
Shalloons, Tammies, &c. —	150,000
Wines, — —	200,000
Brandies, — —	80,000
	2,080,000

And when King James obtained the repeal of the Prohibitory Act in 1685, and the trade was laid open, and continued ſo until 1688; the medium of the imports from France in thoſe three years, as extracted from the Cuſtom-Houſe Books, are ſtated by the *Britiſh Merchant* to have been as follows:

	£.
Linens including Cambrics,	700,000
Luteſtrings and Alamodes, —	212,500
Other Silk Fabrics, —	500,000
Paper, — — —	50,000
Wines, — —	180,150
Brandy, — — —	80,000
	1,722,650

Now

Now from the firſt of theſe accounts it appears, that the articles imported from France were ſuch as we did not then make a ſufficient quantity of for our own conſumption, and that it was not likely we ſhould do without them; and from the ſecond account it is equally evident, that during the eight years of prohibition, we had not ſo much improved in either our Linen or Silk Manufactures, as to reduce the demand for thoſe articles from foreigners; and conſequently that the balance of our foreign trade had not been much lowered by the operation of the prohibitory Act, except in the articles of Iron Ware, Paper, Beaver Hats, Clocks, Watches and Shalloons. The laſt account indeed, ſhews the importation of Silks and Linens to have been larger in the laſt three years than it had been in the year preceding the prohibition; but a conſiderable allowance muſt be made for the eagerneſs of the French Merchants to avail themſelves of the repeal, by throwing in great quantities of their manufactures while the trade continued open: But however large we make

that

that allowance, the accounts I have quoted, muſt ſtill be admitted as a full proof, that the ballance of two millions which was ſtated to be againſt us in 1668; and is not ſuppoſed to have been leſs in 1677; if it had really exiſted, could not have been ſo greatly reduced, by the operation of the Prohibitory Act of the latter year, as to give us ground to expect, that in only eleven years after its renewal in 1688, the whole balance againſt us, would not only be intirely done away, but that a balance ſhould riſe in our favour of upwards of a million; and yet Davenant tells us, that in the year 1699, the general rental of the lands of England, which had been computed at only ſix millions in 1600, was riſen to fourteen millions; that their purchaſe which had been then only twelve years income, and conſequently amounted to no more than ſeventy-two millions, was now eighteen years income, and amounted to two hundred and fifty-two millions. That our exports amounted to 6,788,166l. of which our Woollen Manufactures made three millions; and that our imports

amounted

amounted to no more than 5,640,506 l. leaving a clear balance of 1,147,660 l. in our favour; which *Wood* in his *Survey of Trade*, ſays, had increaſed in the years 1713 and 1714, to 2,103,148 l. upon a medium of thoſe two years.

I am not inclined, nor do I ſee any reaſon to doubt the truth of theſe accounts; but as manufactures do not ſtart up like muſh-rooms, nor trade and ſhipping increaſe like Jonah's Gourd, it appears to me, that theſe inferences may be fairly drawn from them, viz: That the Trade, Manufactures, and Navigation of England were continually increaſing, from the acceſſion of Elizabeth to the Treaty of Utrecht, notwithſtanding the checks given them by foreign and civil wars; and that in no one period of that time, had the balance of trade, diſtinctly conſidered, been againſt this Country: That the injurious effects of an open trade with France have been moſt extravagantly exaggerated; and that, although the balance of our foreign trade increaſed moſt rapidly and conſiderably, after the importation of French

merchandize was prohibited in 1677; much of the exceſs aroſe from other cauſes, and is not to be attributed to that prohibition: And that it alſo appears from this deduction, that there is not any thing in the merchandize or manufactures of France, more particularly noxious to this Country, than in the like merchandize and manufactures of other Nations: Nor that the ſkill and diligence of French manufacturers are ſo unconquerable as to leave no hope for Engliſhmen to equal them in any of their fabrics; and conſequently, that there is no impoſſibility of framing a Treaty of Commerce with France beneficial to this Country.

Under theſe circumſtances, the Utrecht Commercial Treaty preſents itſelf; and it is much to our purpoſe to examine the grounds of its rejection.

The *Britiſh Merchant* ſo often quoted, calculates, that in conſequence of the ſtipulations of that Treaty, our imports from France would annually have amounted to 1,712,559 l. and that our exports thither, would

would not have exceeded 270,181l.; therefore, that a ballance of near a million and a half would have every year accrued againſt us.

Whatever credit this calculation is intitled to, ſtill it ought to be conſidered, that in ſo far as the articles to be imported from France would not have interfered with our own manufactures, or were ſimilar to what we took from other nations; the injury of receiving them from France, rather than from other nations, does not ariſe from the imported articles themſelves; but muſt be transferred to the ſuperior advantages allowed us in our exports to other nations, beyond what France was to have allowed us. For inſtance: As we have no Wines of our own growth, it could be of no material importance to the Nation's Commerce, whither we took our ſupplies from Portugal or France; providing we found the ſame demand for, and facility in, diſpoſing of our manufactures and merchandize in France that we did in Portugal. This, however, would not have been the caſe with any of

our fabrics under the ſtipulations of the Utrecht Treaty, and our Woollens were wholly excluded.

But beſides the great defect of the Treaty, in not providing an advantageous market for Britiſh manufactures and merchandize in France; the permitting the importation of French manufactures into Great Britain, ſubject only to the general tonnage and poundage duties, would probably have been the ruin of our manufactures of Silk, Linen, Iron, Paper and Glaſs; which were then in an infant ſtate, and by no means able to contend with thoſe of France, which had attained a high degree of perfection; and therefore on both theſe accounts, the Treaty muſt have been highly pernicious in its operation, and every Britiſh ſubject has reaſon to rejoice that it never had effect; and more eſpecially, as we may all have the great and ſolid ſatisfaction to perceive with our own eyes, that the trade and manufactures, and ſhipping of this country have increaſed in a moſt aſtoniſhing degree, ſince the acceſſion of the Hanover family in 1714:

And,

And, that notwithſtanding our enormous expenditures in the three laſt wars, our lands have been improved, our towns enlarged, and embelliſhed; and whatever denotes wealth and proſperity has flouriſhed beyond all example.

I ſhall not go about to prove what is ſo evident to the obſervation of all men; but I ſhall add for the comfort, as well as information of my countrymen, a copy of the lateſt eſtimate I have ſeen of the preſent value of the ſeveral manufactures of Great-Britain.

	£.
The Woollen, —	16,800,000
Leather, — —	10,500,000
Flax, — — —	1,750,000
Hemp, — —	890,000
Glaſs, — —	630,000
Paper, — — —	780,000
Porcelain, — —	1,000,000
Silk, — — —	3,350,000
Cotton, — —	960,000
Carried over —	36,660,000

Brought

	£.
Brought over, —	36,660,000
Lead, — —	1,650,000
Tin, — — —	1,000,000
Iron, — —	8,700,000
Steel and Plating, —	3,400,000
Total —	51,410,000

All which fabrics are ſuppoſed to give employment to upwards of five millions of people.

When things have ſucceeded ſo well with us, and our trade and manufactures have increaſed ſo prodigiouſly, it muſt be granted, that the utmoſt caution ought to be uſed in making alterations in our commercial ſyſtem; and that no experiment ought to be tried, whatever probability there may be of its ſucceſs, if its failure may be prejudicial to our trade; unleſs we are urged to it, by motives of a ſuperior nature, to that of preſerving the profits of our Commerce undiminiſhed. *Such motives* however, I do conceive there may be, and now exiſt,

exiſt, and I ſhall venture to aſſign ſome which appear to me, a private individual, but a ſincere well-wiſher to my country; ſo extremely powerful, as to render the experiment of a Commercial Treaty with France, not only prudent, but eſſentially neceſſary to the welfare and happineſs of Great Britain: As I deem it a meaſure likely to remove the ancient national prejudices, which have ſo often occaſioned hoſtilities between the two nations; and to promote the eſtabliſhment of mutual confidence and friendſhip, which I conceive is, in the preſent ſituation of Europe, and of this Country, our ſoundeſt policy and trueſt wiſdom.

This declaration will I know revolt many an honeſt Engliſhman, who has all his life conſidered France as the natural enemy of his country; and many others who eſteem themſelves of a much higher order of politicians, will cenſure it as imprudent, tending to alarm the nation with a revival of the odious Stuart policy; and I ſhall probably be alſo charged by others with being a penſioner of France, and hired

to

to miſlead my countrymen; but as I have already avowed my utter ignorance of the Miniſter's views and purpoſes in making the Treaty, I ſhall as a Britiſh ſubject claim the privilege of ſhewing *my own opinion*, as it can do no harm.

Thoſe who are ſo fond of giving Great Britain a *natural enemy* in the Houſe of Bourbon, ought, one would think, to find her ſome *natural friends* among the other powers of Europe; and it is much to be regretted, that none thought fit to diſcover themſelves when ſhe ſtood ſo much in need of them in the courſe of the laſt war: Where was the *grateful* Houſe of Auſtria? Our *firm Allies* the Dutch? And the *moſt faithful* King of Portugal in the hour of our diſtreſs? The truth is, we have been too long the dupes of our own prejudices, and of the artifices of ſuch as called themſelves our friends, and it is high time we recovered our ſenſes.

If France has been hoſtile to us in her negociations ſince the peace of Utrecht, it was

was we who made her ſo, by treating her as our enemy: When we were allying with Auſtria againſt her, and ſubſidizing every little Prince in Germany, to hold troops in readineſs to attack her; was ſhe to blame for ſtirring us up enemies in Aſia and America, or finding us work at home? What, but the moſt determined prejudices, could have hurried us into the war of 1739 with Spain, which was the forerunner of the French war in 1744; at the merchant's cry of *no ſearch of* their illicit traders, and the patriot's yell for the loſs of Jenkins's ears which were never taken from him? And who will now be hardy enough to aſſert, that it was the intereſt of Great Britain, to make ſettlements beyond the Allegany Mountains in America; or, that we had any buſineſs to interrupt the French in eſtabliſhing a communication by water between their provinces of Canada and Louiſiana? Yet, what other grounds were there, for the war of 1755?

The ſpirit of independence, (I ſpeak from knowledge) had then ſpread far and

wide, though ſecretly, and taken deep root in our colonies; but the leaders of the intended revolt were well aware, that ſhould the French confine the Britiſh Settlements to where the intereſt of England required they ſhould be limited, the eaſt-ſide of the Allegany Mountains, their favourite project could never be brought to bear.—All their arts were therefore put in practice to engage the Engliſh traders and manufacturers, to ſecond their repreſentations of the neceſſity of extirpating the French from the continent of America; and they but too well ſucceeded, for the general prejudice againſt France, and the jealouſy of her hoſtile intentions towards this country, prediſpoſed the multitude to give credit to every fiction of the Americans, and prevented them from entertaining the leaſt ſuſpicion of the ſecret deſigns of their inſidious brethren.

Thoſe two wars may therefore be fairly attributed to the abſurd prejudice of the people of England, in conſidering France as the natural enemy of this country; and as

thoſe

thoſe two wars coſt Great Britain about a hundred millions, and many thouſand people, it is no improper demand upon the advocates for eternal hoſtility with France, to ſhew the advantages the nation obtained by thoſe wars in compenſation for the heavy loſs they brought upon it: Until this eſtimate appears, I ſhall adopt the witty reaſoning of the Duc de Mirepoix, then ambaſſador from France, againſt the commencement of the war of 1755; "that it "was a great pity to cut off ſo many heads "for the ſake of a few hats."

France certainly entered into the laſt war without the ſhadow of juſtice on her ſide; but while we admire and applaud the wiſdom of our Elizabeth, in abetting the Dutch in their revolt from Spain, becauſe that Power was deemed then her natural enemy; ought we not to allow it equally wiſe in France, to avail herſelf of a like opportunity to weaken Great Britain, who had held herſelf out to her in the ſame character? I mean not to palliate, much leſs to juſtify the breach of faith and unprovok-

ed hoſtility in either inſtance; but I wiſh my countrymen to reflect, that however France may merit the epithet of *faithleſs*, plain honeſt John Bull is not perfectly immaculate.

How the King of Spain was brought to join in the laſt war, can be beſt accounted for by thoſe who told Count Almadovar, that orders were given by our King to intercept the Spaniſh Flota on its way to Cadiz; which that Miniſter was weak enough not only to believe, but to aſſure his Court of, before he gave Lord Weymouth an opportunity of undeceiving him; which his Lordſhip did ſo effectually, that the Count made all poſſible haſte to contradict his former intelligence; but alas, his ſecond meſſenger arrived too late: The French party had worked ſo effectually upon the King with the lye, as to overcome his averſion to the war; and the orders for commencing hoſtilities were diſpatched, before the miniſterial contradiction could be brought to detect the patriotic falſhood; I know there are other cauſes aſſigned for the

the Spaniſh King's entering into the war; and I intend, not by this ſtory, to exonerate any man from his due ſhare of culpability, who *knows himſelf* to have been an acceſſory in the fatal buſineſs.

We have been accuſtomed to value the friendſhip of foreign nations by the profits of our trade with them, and we act wiſely in ſo doing; but why ſhould we not open another account with them, and reckon our loſs by their enmity alſo? The Houſe of Bourbon is the only power in Europe that can greatly annoy us, and it is fortunate for us, that we can do them more miſchief than they have to apprehend from any probable combination of other nations, without our aid. It ſhould ſeem therefore the intereſt of both kingdoms, to keep on civil terms at leaſt with each other; but if we go a ſtep further, and conſider them as Allies, how does the importance of every other European power ſhrink before them? The unſtable Joſeph, always the dupe of his own chicanery; and the wily Catharine ever meditating to deceive, would ſoon learn

learn the wiſdom of the old adage, that honeſty is the beſt policy in all their dealings with us.—The apprehenſion of ſuch an alliance has often diſquieted thoſe ſovereigns, and I truſt they will hereafter find more cauſe of uneaſineſs from it.

If France and Great Britain ſhould mutually adopt the policy of living in friendſhip with each other, the jealouſy of the former would not be excited by malicious repreſentations of the extenſive commerce and increaſing wealth of Great Britain; and Great Britain need no longer take alarm at inſinuations of the increaſing influence, and aggrandizement of the Houſe of Bourbon; ſo that the Miniſters of other powers might employ themſelves more uſefully at both courts, than by ſeeking food for the jealouſy of each, and endeavouring to keep alive the embers of enmity between them; which has hitherto been their conſtant practice, and chief buſineſs.

I flatter myſelf, that what I have ſaid, is ſufficient to ſhew the propriety of making

the experiment of a Commercial Treaty with France: I could add other reaſons equally cogent, in favour of a good agreement between the two nations, drawn from a view of the trade and policy of both countries; as I have no doubt it could be made appear, that the proſperity of both is by no means incompatible, and that their trueſt political intereſts do not claſh; but this would lead me into too wide a field of diſcuſſion, and therefore I ſhall leave thoſe topics for the diſplay of the commercial and political abilities of the eloquent Members of both Houſes of Parliament; and proceed to the ſecond queſtion I propounded, and the examination of the late Treaty itſelf.

Whatever may have been Mr. Pitt's motives for opening the Treaty, it muſt readily be allowed by all who are acquainted with the talents and information of Lord Hawkeſbury and Mr. Eden, that he could not have committed the negociation to abler hands; nor could *they* have given a higher proof of their wiſdom and diſcretion,

tion, than by the cautious meaſure of limiting the duration of the Treaty to the ſhort term of twelve years; thereby guarding againſt the poſſibility of the miſchievous conſequences, of either ſuffering materially in ſome of our manufactures, through an unforeſeen advantage obtained by France; or of giving her offence by ſeeking means to counteract it when diſcovered: nor is the meaſure leſs to be commended, upon the ſuppoſition of unforeſeen advantages ariſing on our ſide. For, the long continuance of ſuch advantages, could not fail to give diſſatisfaction to the French Court and People; and thereby diſturb, or at leaſt leſſen that mutual confidence and friendſhip, which it is above all things our intereſt to eſtabliſh.

That the circumſtances of Great Britain are now very different in reſpect to the ſtate of her manufactures, from what they were in the year 1713, will readily be perceived, by comparing the eſtimate I have given of the articles expected to be imported from France, had the Utrecht Treaty of Com-

Commerce been ratified, with the late eſtimate of the value of our ſeveral manufactures; for it muſt appear from thence, that our manufactures of Linen, Hemp, Iron, Paper and Glaſs, have now reached ſuch full perfection, as to be in no danger of being overpowered, or underſold by French fabrics of the ſame denomination, ſubject to a duty of 12 per cent. upon their importation into Great Britain. Even our Silk manufactures, I doubt not, might riſk the competition with the like advantage as is given to the Leather; but as France has that material within herſelf, and England muſt import it, there was much prudence in excluding it entirely from the Tariff; for to whatever heighth of excellence any nation may bring her manufacture of a foreign material, it will be found in the courſe of things, that the country which poſſeſſes the material within herſelf, will one day rival her in it, if the government of the latter be not greatly defective. Nor will I allow the Wool of Spain to be an inſtance to the contrary, for that Country was in poſſeſſion of the Woollen Manu-

factory when ſhe voluntarily drove the manufacturers out of Grenada: She has ſince ſeen her error, and her manufacture is now in a thriving ſtate; and I will venture to foretell, that early in the next century ſhe will find it her intereſt to prohibit the exportation of her Wool; a circumſtance, that Britiſh Miniſters ought to look forward to, and provide againſt in good time; and if any Treaty of Commerce be negociating with Spain, a direction to that purpoſe, would be no improper article in the inſtructions to our new Ambaſſador, whoſe known zeal and ability in his country's ſervice are good warrants of his ſucceſs.

The Utrecht Treaty, I have already obſerved, made no ſtipulation for the admiſſion of our Woollens into France; but that important article of our exports was left to the chance of a future negociation, which is not the caſe in the late Treaty, as their admiſſion is effectually provided for in the Tariff. — And our trade with Portugal, which was ſacrificed by the Utrecht

Utrecht Treaty, will probably be revived by the proviſions in the preſent, reſpecting that kingdom; for we have moſt wiſely reſerved the power of giving her Wines the full benefit of the Methuen Treaty, on the condition of her reſtoring to us the advantages it ſtipulated in favour of our manufactures; and which ſhe in ſo many inſtances, has moſt flagrantly contravened.

Theſe are eſſential differences between the two Treaties, and intitle the latter to the fulleſt approbation of Parliament, although the former was juſtly reprobated.

As reciprocity is the principle of the Treaty, and the only important article againſt which I conceive a ſolid objection could be made on our part, has been excepted in every ſhape; I do not think it neceſſary to enter further into the detail of the ſeveral articles of the Tariff, eſpecially as I find by an advertiſement juſt come to my hands, that the Chamber of Commerce has taken the whole into their conſideration; and as that body is compoſed of

perſons

perſons the moſt eminent and ſkilful in the ſeveral manufactures, the reſult of their inveſtigation muſt be of more authority than that of any individual: I ſhall therefore commit to them the examination of each particular, and only expreſs my hope, That whatever may be their report, they will confine their publications to their *reſolutions* only, without aſſigning their reaſons; for as the principle of the Treaty is a fair one, there is no need to emblazon, or detract from, the advantages which either party may derive from ſuperior exertions of ſkill or induſtry; nor are the benefits of local ſituation, cheapneſs of materials or of living, neceſſary to be diſplayed for the public information on this occaſion.

FINIS.